



Local Extinction in the Bird Assemblage in the Greater Beijing Area from 1877 to 2006

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Auteur Chouteau, Philippe [1], Jiang, Zhigang [2], Bravery, Benjamin D [3], Cai, Jing [4], Li, Zhongqiu [5], Pedrono, Miguel [6], Pays, Olivier [7]

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Résumé en anglais Recent growth in industrialization and the modernization of agricultural activities, combined with human population growth, has greatly modified China's natural environment, particularly in the vicinity of large cities. We compared avifauna checklists made between 1877 and 1938 with current checklists to determine the extent of local bird extinctions during the last century in the greater Beijing area. Our study shows that of the 411 bird species recorded from 1877–1938, 45 (10.9%) were no longer recorded from 2004–2006. Birds recorded as 'rare' in 1938 were more likely to have disappeared in subsequent years. Migrant status also influenced the probability of local bird extinction with winter migrants being the most affected class. Moreover, larger birds were more likely to have disappeared than smaller ones, potentially explained by differential ecological requirements and anthropogenic exploitation. Although our habitat descriptions and diet classification were not predictors of local bird extinction, the ecological processes driving local bird extinction are discussed in the light of historical changes that have impacted this region since the end of the 1930 s. Our results are of importance to the broader conservation of bird wildlife.

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Liens

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